DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 306 274 TM 013 110

AUTHOR McMillan, James H.
TITLE Conceptualizing and Assessing College Student Values.
SPONS AGENCY Virginia Commonwealth Univ., Richmond.; Virginia State Council of Higher Education, Richmond.
PUB DATE Mar 89
NOTE 39p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, March 27-31, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Altruism; *Attitude Measures; Cognitive Development; *College Students; Creative Thinking; Educational Assessment; Ethics; Evaluation Methods; Higher Education; Life Satisfaction; Moral Development; Moral Values; Pilot Projects; Political Attitudes; *Student Attitudes; *Values; Values Clarification
IDENTIFIERS Focus Group Assessment; *Student Surveys; Virginia Commonwealth University

ABSTRACT

Values and the process of valuing were studied among college students. A framework for conceptualizing college student values developed over a period of 2 years by a 10-member faculty and staff committee at Virginia Commonwealth University (Richmond) involved the movement of students from recognition of values, through critical thinking, to commitment to definite values. Values were categorized as values toward: (1) intellectual functioning; (2) others; (3) the role of spirituality in one's life; (4) personal and professional growth; and (5) social and political consciousness and responsibility. Focus group techniques were used to study the values of 21 female and 10 male college juniors. Using this material, the values team developed a 95-item survey, pilot tested with 210 students (65% female). Survey results tend to support the findings of the focus groups, with strong orientation toward occupational preparation. Interest in developing other identified areas was somewhat weaker, but still strong. A writing sample exercise for values assessment developed and tested with nine juniors provided results in line with the other assessments. The procedures developed provide some methodology for studying values and valuing. The focus group approach seemed particularly informative and stimulating. The focus group topic outline, the group screening instrument, the values survey, and the writing assignments are appended. (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED306274

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

James H. McMillan

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CONCEPTUALIZING AND ASSESSING COLLEGE STUDENT VALUES

James H. McMillan
Virginia Commonwealth University
March, 1989

Paper presented at the 1989 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Support to complete work on this paper was provided by the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia and the Varieties of Undergraduate Experience project of Virginia Commonwealth University. Members of the Values Team of the Varieties project providing direct assistance include Tom McGovern, Jon Wergin, Deb Hogshead, Lou Abbey, Bill Daughtrey, Nora Donohue, Sandy Guerard, Mark Overvold, and Dick Wilson.

TM013110

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

There appears to be a significant renewed interest in the nature and development of college student values. Stimulated by the disarray in liberal education, the increasing role of technology, and societal changes that have promulgated a culture of selfishness, there is a growing awareness that values provide an essential basis for linking knowledge with action (Collins, 1983; Morrill, 1980). Recent concern is based on a substantial amount of research that indicates an erosion of college students' ethical values. Astin's longitudinal research clearly shows a twenty year trend of increasing importance for status, self-fulfillment, and income with a corresponding decline in concern for developing a meaningful philosophy of life, altruism, and social consciousness. Students are becoming more self-centered, hedonistic and self-indulgent. Dalton (1985) suggests that some of this value change is attributable to the "neglect of ethical values and standards in the institutional life of colleges and universities" (p. 18), and the "values neutral" position adopted by many faculty and staff. Whatever the reasons, it seems clear that colleges and universities must take strong steps to address this significant problem.

One of the challenges of working in this area is to sort out the many conceptualizations and definitions of the term "values." Typically, heated discussions are needed to distinguish terms like values, morals, ethics, attitudes and opinions, and to identify the role of the institution in value development. While ethical values and related issues of morality have been investigated to describe value development during the college years (Kitchener, 1986; Perry, 1970), a continuing difficulty has been formulating a <u>useful</u> conceptualization of the nature of values. Many of the traditional definitions represent values as end states, without reference to the developmental

processes involved in value changes. In fact, many faculty and administrators are uncomfortable, to say the least, about fostering specific values. Rather, they emphasize "thinking about" values. William Perry and others have suggested some approaches to this thinking process, but this work has not been related to the development of specific values.

Most would agree that students should have the freedom to make fundamental decisions about what values they think are most important, that student values should be informed and thoughtful, that the process whereby individuals form values is reflective and critical, and that higher education is committed to special ideas and values, such as freedom of thought, the belief that opinions and values should be justified by sound reasoning, tolerance of differing values, and academic integrity. Thus, the university provides a unique environment not only to encourage students to reflect meaningfully on their own values, but also to involve them with specific values the university endorses. The conceptualization of values presented in the paper integrates these two aspects of valuing, the process of how values are developed, and specific values that a college or university might endorse.

Another nagging issue with values, which has been heightened by the assessment movement, is the question of measurement. How can we assess either the processes involved in valuing or specific values? There are a number of standardized, objective values surveys, but often the values do not correspond very closely with the mission of a specific institution. Surveys can provide a general description of student values, but do not help to understand why students hold these values or the students' thinking about values beyond initial, superficial responses. Qualitative research techniques provide a

richer understanding of reasons, but have not been used very extensively. The study reported in this paper pilot tests new qualitative and quantitative techniques to provide a greater understanding of both value development and specific values.

A Framework for Conceptualizing College Student Values

If we assume that each institution must develop it's own ideas about values, it is not useful to describe a single conceptualization of values. Rather, what may be of most use is to provide a framework that could be used as a basis for more specific conceptualizations. Over a period of two years a ten member faculty/staff committee at Virginia Commonwealth University reviewed values literature, university goals, and potential value outcomes to develop the framework presented. The framework was circulated in draft form to all faculty and staff, and some students, for review and suggestions. Seven faculty were "commissioned" to write formal reaction papers to the suggested framework. The process was part of a larger project to identify and assess general education at a large, urban university. The result was to separate the process of value development, or valuing, from values per se. The process of value development provides students with the intellectual tools to recognize, think about, and establish values. This process involves three hierarchical steps:

1. Recognition and Understanding of Values
    a. To recognize when choices have moral implications.
    b. To understand the nature of moral, ethical, and normoral values.
    c. To appreciate the pervasiveness and importance of values.

2. Development of Thinking Skills Related to Value Questions
   a. To develop effective critical thinking about values.
   b. To develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the complex contexts and relationships in which values are important.
3. Development of Commitment to Values
   a. To develop and articulate a consistent system of values, without imposition from or upon others.
   b. To internalize values, giving them a significant role in one's life.
   c. To be able to act upon one's value system in day-to-day activities, to the solving of problems, and to decision-making.

This process moves the student from awareness, to effective critical thinking about the role of specific values, to commitment to certain values. Kitchener (1983), Perry (1970), Kohlberg (1980), Rest (1979), Earley, Mentkowski and Schafer (1980), and the values clarification approach provides examples of developing students' thinking about values. Alverno's approach includes six levels of valuing, beginning with awareness and ending with "sustaining involvement."

If college catalogs contain valid statements about the goals of higher education, then we must be concerned with more than the intellectual process of valuing, we must also pursue the development of specific values. While no

"list" of specific values would be universally agreed on, there are some that would be hard for any institution to ignore:

1. Values Toward Intellectual Functioning
   a. Intellectual disposition (i.e., openness to new ideas [less dogmatic]; autonomy and independence of thought with a willingness to question authority; appreciation of the university as an environment for free exchange of ideas and for vibrant confrontation and dialogue).
   b. Academic integrity and honesty.
   c. Persistence
   d. Lifelong learning.
2. Values Toward Others
   a. Interdependence and cooperation with a high regard for the development of interpersonal skills.
   b. Tolerance, acceptance, respect and an affinity toward diversity of others.
   c. Adaptability and flexibility (i.e., willingness to negotiate, compromise, keep options open).
   d. Respect for human dignity.
   e. Altruism
3. Values Toward the Role of Spirituality in One's Life (i.e., one's relationship to a power beyond oneself; to find meaning in existence; to transcend the material world).
4. Values Toward Personal and Professional Growth

a. Autonomy and independence.

b. Self-knowledge, self-confidence, and self-esteem.

c. Career, professional, or occupational development.

d. Health and wellness, leisure-time, and recreational activities.

e. Aestheticism.

f. Understanding and appreciation of historical perspectives.

g. Ethics involved in a career, profession, or occupation.

5. Social and Political Consciousness and Responsibility

a. Political heritage (e.g., freedom, equality, liberty, individualism, due process, democracy).

b. Involvement in the democratic process.

c. Involvement in community services to others.

d. Responsibilities of citizenship.

The values toward intellectual functioning are perhaps the most fundamental to higher education. These would include what Scheffler (1977) has termed cognitive emotions, such as "a love of truth and a contempt of lying, a concern for accuracy in observation and inference, and a corresponding repugnance of error...a revulsion at distortion, disgust at evasion, and the joy of verification" (p. 173, 179).

At the very least, students should use the skills of effective valuing to consider the importance of each value. Some would suggest that the institution should explicitly and overtly inculcate specific values as well as the process of valuing. However it turns out, it seems useful to separate valuing from values.

<u>Assessing Values</u>

Assessment techniques should be based on a clear rationale and purpose. In the present context, data were needed to analyze group responses for the purpose of program and curricular development. A multi-method assessment approach was developed and pilot tested to provide convergence of results across methodology for validity, and to provide information unique to each method that would otherwise not be collected. The three methods were focus group interviews, a student self-report survey, and student writing samples of responses to an ethical situation.

Focus group interviewing is a qualitative technique the has been used extensively in marketing research. The purpose of the approach is to provide higher quality and greater richness of information because of shared opinions, ideas and discussions of members of a small group who have similar experiences. Through a series of discussions with consultants who had conducted focus groups, the technique was adapted to study values. First, a topic outline was prepared to guide the discussion (see appendix). Thirty one students were then selected from a randomly generated list of non-transfer juniors. The students were called randomly by phone from the list and selected by criteria of a "screener" to enhance group interaction and discussion (see appendix). There were 21 females and 10 males representing most majors. Each student participated in one of three 1 1/2 - 2 hour groups. Two of the groups were video recorded, the third audio recorded, and transcripts were used to analyze the results. The analysis was done independently by 16 faculty, most of whom subsequently met to identify major finding and conclusions, illustrated by direct quotes whenever possible. The validity of the findings are enhanced to the extent that the independent analyses came to similar conclusions.

Three major themes were identified. The first was that values were defined by students as relativistic and in terms of personality and personal modes of conduct, stressing careerism, self-centeredness and personal accomplishment. There was little or no emphasis on global issues or values like equality, freedom or esthetics. The students explained their careerism and self-centeredness as being necessary in today's society and culture. That is, they externalized the reason for their inward focus. The theme of individuality and doing "what's best for me" was further illustrated by student responses to ethical situations defined by the game "Scruples," in which about half of the students admitted that they would attempt an illegal or otherwise socially unacceptable act if they were not "caught." However, students were very clear about the importance of academic integrity, and disowned cheating.

Student responses included:

"Way back when, females could get married, have children and raise a family. Whereas today, unless their husband is super rich, the mothers have to work also. It's the way society has changed the person's values."

"I think they are thinking more of their careers. They are not really concentrating on the environment which they shouldn't be. I think they should get more involved in politics and things like that. I don't think a lot of people actually know what's going on."

"I think money is an enormous factor, especially today."

To cheating, one student responded:

"It's unseemly, it's tacky, it's stupid, and you don't have to do it. It's essentially petty. You are not really hurting anyone seriously except maybe yourself."

"My card says, 'You and your best friend are graduating and looking for jobs in the same field. You hear of an excellent opportunity. Do you inform your friend?' I would check it out first. If it was the only position, I would take it. If there was another position after I had accepted the position, then yes I would definitely inform him about it. I would go for the job first if I saw it."

One faculty member noted:

"The students in general associated the concept of 'values' with their personal convictions."

A second theme was the students' perceived growth in cultural awareness, tolerance for others, and a greater understanding of diversity of opinions and values. They attributed this largely to the diversity of students in and around the university. This diversity did not seem to change values as much as reinforce existing or entering values, helping students to become more independent and self-reliant with flexibility and adaptability.

Typical student comments:

"You have to learn to deal and adjust with all kinds of people and I think that's really good. I think it has enriched me. I've come to respect all kinds of people whereas before, if I went somewhere and saw a black and white relationship, where I'm from, it's not really highly regarded and people look down at it."

"One thing that's good about VCU, you have to accept different types of people. There is such a wide range."

"I think you become more independent. Especially if you are living away from home, you kind of have to be."

"I had to learn when I first came here to budget my time. Because the social life is enormous. In high school, it was the same way. I always wanted to talk and socialize. Finally, I think after three years, I've sort of learned that there are priorities."

"You have to become independent. You have your own time schedule, classes every other day, and work. You have to know how to handle situations pretty well."

Some faculty noted:

"The primary change in values since coming to VCU expressed by the students was that of more tolerance for other people and their opinions."

"A common theme among the students was openness and tolerance."

A third theme was that students are very serious about their education. They are willing to challenge professors, to question authority, and engage in debate. They believed they were open-minded and seemed to resent classes in

which questioning of dogma was not permitted. They had difficulty articulating how the university had affected their values beyond their major.

Student comments:

"When a professor tries to impose his views on me, then I feel that the ball is in my court and you need to challenge your professor."

"I've had my pick of bad professors too. That what they say is 'the' way and they're not going to listen to a challenge and they don't want to hear your opinion."

Professor comment:

"Through academic studies they learned to debate issues, be open to ideas, to respect other opinions, while taking the opportunity to disagree with their professors and form their own opinions."

The purpose of a focus group is to provide an in-depth understanding of something, not to represent values of a larger group of students or compare values of different groups of students. The students and faculty were eager to participate and found the experience enjoyable. The technique was judged to be somewhat successful. There could have been more discussion, perhaps challenging students about the "me-ism" in their responses. Perhaps problems, dilemmas or policy issues would have encouraged greater in-depth discussions. The students seemed honest, but perhaps gave socially desirable responses. The game of Scruples, while intended as a "warm-up," provided some of the most interesting responses of students. This is a more indirect method of assessment, and, in this case, proved to be very revealing. Overall, the results have been very useful as a stimulus to raise issues for discussion, as a means to involve students and faculty meaningfully, and as a way to provide a "richer" understanding of values. For example, the externalization of selfishness, attributing the "reason" to "the culture," was interesting, as was the finding that beyond the initial emphasis on careerism there seemed to be a real concern for the welfare of others and social consciousness. The

students "wanted" to be more altruistic but felt "compelled" to be self-centered. Perhaps the university is modeling a greater concern for careerism?

The second method to assess values was a student self report survey which would provide a direct indication of students' perceptions of the importance of values to themselves and the university, and would indicate perceptions of students of the impact of VCU on their values. It was felt that an objective instrument could be used to identify representative values of VCU students and value issues that need further investigation in settings such as focus groups.

Based on our values framework, objectives, and existing value surveys, the Values Team brainstormed several approaches to asking questions. Through a rather long sequence of discussions and drafts, a 95 item survey was developed (see Appendix). The survey was designed to identify discrepancies between the perceived importance of values to themselves and to the university.

The survey was pilot-tested with 210 students (65% female; 20% sophomores, 60% juniors, and 20% seniors) from classes taught by members of the values team and from resident assistants, representing seven schools and colleges within the university.

The results indicated the 80-90% of the students judged factors associated with intellectual functioning (e.g., being open minded, thinking independently) as essential or very important; 70-80% judged interaction with others, altruism, and finding a purpose and meaning in life essential or very important; 96% thought preparing for a career or occupation was essential or very important; 58% agreed or strongly agreed that preparing for a career was the primary purpose of VCU; 60% agreed or strongly agreed that VCU has increased their understanding of historical or political perspectives; 56%

agreed or strongly agreed that the arts (e.g., music, sculpture) were an important part of their lives. There were few differences between groups of students by major or between males and females. Students reported difficulty in answering questions about the importance of value to the "university." A complete summary of responses to each question is included in the Appendix.

While the results of the survey appear to support the findings from the focus group, with a strong orientation toward career or occupational preparation and intellectual functioning, with somewhat less emphasis toward altruism and finding purpose and social consciousness, the differences with some comparisons are not great. That is, students reported a strong interest in developing in all these areas. Their perception of the impact of the university on them indicated greater differences, reflecting what the students perceive as a strong university orientation toward career, with substantially less influence on social consciousness, and even less on historical and political perspectives. This suggests that the university may need to examine it's curriculum to determine the emphasis given these different areas.

The survey was successful, then, in raising issues and emphasizing the desire of students to grow in the value areas surveyed. It has also been useful in examining change of values longitudinally. It has been given to a random sample of entering freshman at the university, and will be readministered a year later to assess changes.

In order to assess values less directly and assess the quality of thinking skills associated with value issues, a writing sample exercise was developed. Based on discussions with faculty who have been involved with teaching and evaluating ethical thinking, and on some models, such as Alverno's, for using writing to assess values, two student "assignments" were

constructed to provide an indication of strength of response in three areas: intellectual functioning; values toward others; and social and/or political consciousness and responsibility (see Appendix for the assignments). The assignments were given to nine junior level students enrolled in an ethics class as a class assignment. Each response was judged by seven faculty according to a writing assessment grading system developed by members of the values team. The approach to judging the responses was holistic in each of the three criteria areas, with a Likert type 1-5 scale with descriptions for judging each criteria area (see Appendix for a description of the rating system).

The results indicated substantial inter-rater agreement in assigning the ratings to each criteria area. Across students there was reasonable variability, with a range between 2-5. For the most part, there was little difference in the ratings given to each criteria area. This indicates the difficulty of separating judgments of values shown from skills of thinking about the values. It was also difficult to separate writing skills from the evaluation of values and thinking skills. As a group, the student responses were judged to be very good, which could be expected since the students were enrolled in an ethics course and had previous, similar assignments.

Summary and Conclusions

The framework for conceptualizing values into valuing and specific value areas was an effective way to address a complex and sometimes volatile issue. The notion of valuing is value neutral in the sense that no single value is encouraged or promoted, and the process skills seem essential to the purpose of higher education. The assessment procedures that were developed provide some methodological ideas to study values and valuing. In particular, the

qualitative approach of focus groups seemed especially informative and stimulating. It has been received well by students and faculty, and clearly encourages meaningful involvement to discuss value issues. Given the need to address value development, this seems to be an important contribution of focus groups. The survey seems useful for describing student perceptions of values and may be helpful in identifying changes in student values.

It appears that student values may reflect larger cultural values and institutional emphasis in various areas. The initial description of students as selfish, career oriented and concerned with themselves more than helping others may oversimplify the actual values of students. Beyond these culturally normative responses may be an unfulfilled desire for altruistic and social conscious contributions. In an urban university a clear value outcome, as perceived by students, was achieving tolerance of others, independence and responsibility. This seemed to result more from the mix of different kinds of people at the university than from anything explicit that the university was responsible for. In both the survey and focus groups students indicated little influence from curriculum or professors, except in a few cases. These findings are consistent with previous research on the impact of large universities.

The effort to develop a "local" conception of values and to use both qualitative and quantitative assessments has been successful in addressing values to the larger university community.

References

Collins, M. J. (Ed.) (1983). Teaching values and ethics in college. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Dalton, J. C. (1985). Values education: A new priority for college student development. In J. C. Dalton (Ed.) Promoting values development in college students. National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Earley, M., Mentkowski, M. & Schafer, J. (1980). Valuing at Alverno: The valuing process in liberal education. Milwaukee, WI: Alverno Publications.

Kitchener, K. S. (1986). The reflective judgement model: Characteristics, evidence, and measurement. In R.A. Mines & K.S. Kitchener (Eds.), Cognitive development in young adults. New York: Praeger.

Kohlberg, L. (1980). High school democracy and educating for a just society. In R.L. Mosher, (Ed.), Moral education: A first generation of research and development. New York: Praeger.

Morrill, R. L. (1980). Teaching values in college.. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Perry, W. G. (1970). Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Rest, J. R. (1979). Development in judging moral issues. University of Minnesota Press.

Scheffler, I. (1977). In praise of the cognitive emotions. Teachers College Record, 79, 171-186.

Appendix

Focus group topic outline

Focus group screener

Values survey

Values Writing Assignments and Grading System

Draft 2/15/88

FOCUS GROUP TOPIC OUTLINE

VALUES COMMITTEE

I. Introduction

A. Purpose of group

B. Student introductions - name, major

II. Warm-Up - Value Perceptions

A. Role playing

1. Have students play "Scruples" as a warm-up

2. Ask students how they would respond to different scenarios

B. Leisure time

1. How do you spend your time?

2. In a typical 24 hour day, how much time is spent studying, working, exercising, relaxing, partying, etc.?

C. Attitudes

1. If I said, "That student has strong values--how would you describe that person? How would you characterize that student?

2. If I said, "That student has no sense of values," how does that person differ?

III. General Value Changes Resulting From VCU Experiences

A. Some attention has been focused on how our current generation of young adults differs in their values from previous generations. For example, college students in the 60s placed emphasis on social issues like Vietnam, civil rights, and the environment. College students of the 80s have been characterized as the "me" generation, with a focus on careers, physical fitness, and "the good life." How would you describe yourself and your friends?

1. How have your values changed while at VCU? How have your experiences with faculty, students, and/or classes changed your values?
2. Have your experiences at VCU increased your understanding of values and how they affect the choices you make?
3. How has VCU affected that change?
4. Have your experiences at VCU helped you find meaning/purpose in your life?
5. Have value changes occurred due to your coursework? Give examples of courses that have changed your values both within and outside of your major.
6. On the matter of values, does your coursework reinforce or conflict with your values and your experiences outside the classroom?

B. Values Toward Intellectual Functioning

1. What are the most exciting and interesting ideas you've encountered at VCU. Where did you encounter them? (e.g., books, faculty, other students)
2. Do you discuss very much with others ideas about politics, social issues or current events?
3. Do you feel free to question and/or disagree with professors' ideas and what is written in the textbooks? Why? Why not? Is it a good thing that students do this?
4. Do you think of yourself as someone who is open to new ideas and different ways of thinking? Why? Cite some examples.
5. When people differ, is it usually the case that one is right and one is wrong? What about when experts disagree?

6. How do you respond when an editorial in the newspaper or a newspaper such as Commonwealth Times disagrees with your position on an important issue?

   a. What steps do you take?

   b. Would your current response differ from what you would have done before entering college? Why? Why not?

7. Which is more important, training for a career or a broad liberal arts education? Why? Is how much money you'll make as a result of your education a factor? Why?

C. Ethical Values

1. Recent attention has focused on professional and personal ethics as illustrated by movies such as Wall Street and Fatal Attraction. Do you believe that your peers are concerned about or discuss ethical and moral issues. What issues? What concerns?

2. How has VCU affected you understanding of the ethics of your future occupation/profession? Do you think that your profession makes a valuable and important part of the community. How? Why or why not?

3. Academic integrity and honesty

   a. What do you think about students' cheating on papers and exams? Is it related in any way to larger issues of professional ethics like what we've seen recently with Boleskey & Hait?

   b. How serious a problem is cheating at VCU? Do you view it as a moral problem or unfair competition?

c. How do you respond when you see someone cheating during an exam?

d. Is what you would do now different than what you would have done before entering college? Why? Why not?

e. What should happen to students who are caught cheating?

D. Cultural Values

1. How has VCU affected your awareness of cultural dimensions and the arts?
2. Have you attended any cultural events offered by VCU? What? When?
3. Do you feel you have a better understanding of the arts now or not? Why?

E. Community/Civic Involvement

1. How has VCU affected your awareness of social issues, and the need for community involvement and responsibility?
2. Do you do volunteer work or participate in any community or civic activities?

F. Spirituality

1. How would you define spirituality? How does that differ from religion?
2. How has VCU affected your ideas about spirituality?
3. Does VCU address students' spirituality needs?

SCREENER

Value Focus Groups

☐ 1/2 Male ☐ 1/2 Female

Hello. This is _____. I'm calling on behalf of V.C.U. We are conducting a survey on the variety of undergraduate experiences at V.C.U., sponsored by the State Council of Higher Education. I'd like to take just a few minutes to ask you some questions.

1. First, what is your class standing? Are you a

	Freshman ☐
Terminate	Sophomore ☐
Continue	Junior ☐
Terminate	Senior ☐

2. Are you currently a:

	Full-time student ☐
Terminate	Part-time student ☐

3. Are you a transfer student?

	Yes ☐
Terminate	No ☐

4. Have you lived for at least one year on or near campus?

Yes ☐

No ☐

5. What is your major?

_____

Get a good mix of majors

6. What is your age?

If not between 19 - 23, terminate

7.

(NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: ASK THE FOLLOWING SERIES OF QUESTIONS. READ IN A - B- C - D - E - F - G - H ORDER. CIRCLE THE LETTERS OF ANY STATEMENTS WHICH THE RESPONDENT SAYS DESCRIBES HIM OR HER.)

I'm going to read some statements which may or may not describe you. Please tell me which ones describe you and which ones don't.

COLUMN ONE	COLUMN TWO
A. I enjoy solving puzzles, word games, and like to figure out how to do things.	B. I tend to be rather introverted and quiet in my classes. I'd rather let other students do all the talking.
C. I like to get involved in discussions that challenge me to think and express my viewpoint.	D. I feel uncomfortable and shy discussing my ideas and opinions in front of others.
E. I am comfortable expressing my thoughts, feelings and opinions in the company of others, even if they're strangers.	F. Other people usually have much better ideas than I do.
IF THE RESPONDENT PICKS "C" AND/OR "E," HE/SHE QUALIFIES FOR THE FOCUS GROUP.	**IF THE RESPONDENT PICKS ANY ONE OF THE ABOVE STATEMENTS, HE/SHE DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR THE FOCUS GROUP.**

VCU is conducting a study about student values, and is interested in some of your experiences at the University. On February 29th and March 8th, we will be conducting discussion groups about this subject and we would like you to participate. Each group session is informal and all you will be asked to do is given your opinions. The group discussion will be videotaped for the purposes of analysis and training. Final reports will not identify participants by name in the study. Dress is casual and VCU will provide a $20 stipend for your time and expenses to come to the group. There will be 10 other students like yourself coming and the group discussion will last for approximately 2 hours. The sessions will be held at the offices of SIR, on February 29th at 5 and 7 PM, and on the VCU campus March 8th at 1 PM.

Are you willing to participate in this study?

Which session would you like to attend?

Southeastern Institute of Research
2325 W. Broad Street
Across from DMV and the Science Museum

Feb. 29		March 8
___ 6 PM	On campus students	___ 1 PM
___ 8 PM	Off campus students	

Do you have transportation? ___ Yes

___ No, will need to be picked up in front of the library at 4:45 (or 6:45).

We will send you a letter in the mail, with the date, time and place. We will also call the day before to remind you. We will be counting on your attendance since we are only inviting 10 students.

If you would like more information, you can call James McMillan at 367-1332.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ___ Zip Code: _____

Phone (Home): _____ (Work): _____

Date: _____ Interviewer: _____

Session: ___ Feb. 29 5 PM
___ Feb. 29 7 PM
___ March 8 1 PM

Results of the Values Survey

Attached are results of the Values Survey. Data are presented in terms of frequency distributions and mean scores and are outlined according to Values Outcomes. The survey item is listed on the left and is immediately followed by the descriptive statistics, with the frequency distributions (e.g., the number and percentage of students agreeing or disagreeing with the item) reported first and the mean score reported last.

Three different response scales were used in the survey. To make sense of how the frequency distributions are reported here, refer to the scale anchors listed below along with their corresponding abbreviations.

Very Somewhat Not Very
Essential--Important--Important--Important

(Abbreviated: E--VI--SI--NVI)

Strongly Agree --Agree-- Neither Agree Nor --Disagree--Disagree-- Strongly Disagree

(Abbreviated: SA--A--N--D--SD)

Always--Often--Sometimes--Rarely--Never

(Abbreviated: A--O--S--R--N)

Please note: Percentages may not total 100% since frequency of "no response" to each item was not included for the purposes of this report.

The Process of Value Development

1. Recognition and Understanding of Values

   a. To recognize when choices have moral implications.

I understand the moral implications of choices I make..62(28%)A. 124(56%)O. 24(11%)S. 2(1%)R. $\bar{X}$=1.84

My experiences at VCU have helped me to understand the value or moral implications of choices I make.....33(15%)S.A. 92(42%)A. 53(24%)N. 28(13%)D. 11(5%)S.D. $\bar{X}$=2.50

   b. To understand the nature of moral, ethical, and nonmoral values.

I have a good understanding of the nature of values...57(26%)S.A. 125(57%)A. 25(11%)N. 5(2%)D. $\bar{X}$=1.90

I have a good understanding of the nature of morality.....58(26%)S.A. 114(52%)A. 33(15%)N. 9(4%)D. 1(1%)S.D. $\bar{X}$=1.98

* As a result of my experiences at VCU, I have improved my understanding of values.....20(9%)S.A. 76(34%)A. 72(33%)N. 30(14%)D. 13(6%)S.D. $\bar{X}$=2.72

As a result of my experiences at VCU, I have improved my understanding of morality.....24(11%)S.A. 75(34%)A. 64(29%)N. 35(16%)D. 16(7%)S.D. $\bar{X}$=2.74

3. Development of Commitment to Values

a. To develop and articulate a consistent system of values, without imposition from or upon others.

92 %

Developing well thought out moral standards.

A. To you personally.....110(50%)E. 93(42%)V.I. 12(5%)S.I. 3(1%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=1.58
B. To the university.....60(27%)E. 71(32%)V.I. 63(29%)S.I. 20(9%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=2.20

57 %

Developing my values and moral standards.

92

A. To you personally.....129(58%)E. 75(34%)V.I. 12(5%)S.I. 2(1%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=1.48
B. To the university.....49(22%)E. 78(36%)V.I. 57(26%)S.I. 31(14%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=2.83

57

c. To be able to act upon one's value system in day-to-day activities, to the solving of problems, and to decision-making.

What I do or the decisions I make conflict with what I think is morally right.....3(1%)A. 24(11%)O. 81(37%)S. 91(41%)R. 16(7%)N. $\bar{X}$=3.43

Student Involvement with Specific Values Endorsed by the University

1. Values Toward Intellectual Functioning

   a. Intellectual disposition (i.e., openness to new ideas [less dogmatic]; autonomy and independence of thought with a willingness to question authority; appreciation of the university as a free exchange of ideas and as an environment for vibrant confrontation and dialogue).

Thinking independently. 98

A. To you personally.....155 (70%)E. 62 (28%)V.I. 2 (1%)S.I. 2 (1%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=1.30
B. To the university.....90 (41%)E. 71 (32%)V.I. 44 (20%)S.I. 11 (5%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=1.89
73

Being open to new ideas and attitudes. 94

A. To you personally.....128 (58%)E. 79 (36%)V.I. 9 (4%)S.I. $\bar{X}$=1.48
B. To the university.....95 (43%)E. 64 (29%)V.I. 41 (19%)S.I. 16 (7%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=1.90
72

Critically evaluating what I read or hear. 80

A. To you personally.....66 (30%)E. 111 (50%)V.I. 37 (17%)S.I. 3 (1%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=1.89
B. To the university.....74 (34%)E. 96 (43%)V.I. 41 (19%)S.I. 3 (1%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=1.87
77

Challenging professors and what is written in textbooks.

A. To you personally..... 39 (18%)E. 95 (43%)V.I. 65 (29%)S.I. 16 (7%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=2.27
B. To the university.....53 (24%)E. 75 (34%)V.I. 58 (26%)S.I. 28 (13%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=2.29
58

Seeking out material that challenges my beliefs and values. 58

A. To you personally.....33 (15%)E. 94 (43%)V.I. 72 (33%)S.I. 20 (9%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=2.36
B. To the university.....35 (16%)E. 93 (42%)V.I. 68 (31%)S.I. 22 (10%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=2.35
58

Spending time in academic, scholarly and intellectual activities.

A. To you personally.....	56 (28%) E.	106 (48%) V.I.	49 (22%) S.I.	5 (2%) N.V.I.	$\bar{X}$ = 2.01
B. To the university.....	79 (36%) E.	98 (44%) V.I.	35 (16%) S.I.	4 (2%) N.V.I.	$\bar{X}$ = 1.83

Discussing philosophical problems like the nature of the ideal society.

A. To you personally.....	30 (14%) E.	60 (27%) V.I.	87 (39%) S.I.	41 (19%) N.V.I.	$\bar{X}$ = 2.64
B. To the university.....	22 (10%) E.	71 (32%) V.I.	95 (43%) S.I.	29 (13%) N.V.I.	$\bar{X}$ = 2.60

Eliminating any ambiguities and uncertainties.

A. To you personally.....	63 (29%) E.	107 (48%) V.I.	41 (19%) S.I.	5 (2%) N.V.I.	$\bar{X}$ = 1.94
B. To the university.....	49 (22%) E.	83 (38%) V.I.	56 (25%) S.I.	28 (13%) N.V.I.	$\bar{X}$ = 2.29

When I disagree with my professors or textbooks I state my opinion..... 12 (5%) A. 45 (20%) O. 90 (41%) S. 60 (27%) R. 9 (4%) N. $\bar{X}$ = 3.04

* When I disagree with my professors or textbooks my professors encourage me to explain why I disagree..... 32 (15%) A. 63 (28%) O. 70 (32%) S. 36 (16%) R. 11 (5%) N. $\bar{X}$ = 2.68

I disagree with what my VCU professors and textbooks say is true..... 1 (5%) A. 19 (9%) O. 117 (53%) S. 74 (34%) R. 4 (2%) N. $\bar{X}$ = 3.28

b. Academic integrity and honesty.

Being honest in academic work such as writing papers and taking tests.

A. To you personally.....	161 (73%) E.	51 (23%) V.I.	3 (1%) S.I.	1 (.5%) N.V.I.	$\bar{X}$ = 1.28
B. To the university.....	160 (72%) E.	46 (21%) V.I.	8 (4%) S.I.	2 (1%) N.V.I.	$\bar{X}$ = 1.32

c. Persistence.

Being willing to struggle with a difficult problem and come up with a good solution.

A. To you personally.....85(39%)E. 113(51%)V.I. 18(8%)S.I. 2(1%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=1.71
B. To the university.....75(34%)E. 95(43%)V.I. 29(13%)S.I. 16(7%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=1.94

When I encounter difficulty in something I usually abandon it and try something else.....8(4%)S.A. 9(4%)A. 25(11%)N. 104(47%)D. 72(33%)S.D. $\bar{X}$=4.02

2. Values Toward Others

a. Interdependence and cooperation with a high regard for the development of interpersonal skills.

Making an effort to get along with people who disagree with me.

A. To you personally.....70(32%)E. 91(41%)V.I. 50(23%)S.I. 8(4%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=1.98
B. To the university.....53(24%)E. 72(33%)V.I. 65(29%)S.I. 22(10%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=2.24

Discussing my views with others who have different opinions.

A. To you personally.....61(28%)E. 107(48%)V.I. 46(21%)S.I. 6(3%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=1.99
B. To the university.....47(21%)E. 88(40%)V.I. 69(31%)S.I. 14(6%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=2.23

e. Altruism

Helping others who are in difficulty.

A. To you personally.....82(37%)E. 101(46%)V.I. 31(14%)S.I. 3(1%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=1.79
B. To the university.....73(33%)E. 64(29%)V.I. 55(25%)S.I. 23(10%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=2.13

3. Values Toward the Role of Spirituality in One's Life (i.e., one's relationship to a power beyond oneself; to find meaning in existence; to transcend the material world)

Developing a spiritual dimension in my life.

A. To you personally.....86(39%)E. 64(29%)V.I. 43(20%)S.I. 26(12%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=2.05
B. To the university.....16(7%)E. 33(15%)V.I. 69(31%)S.I. 95(43%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$=3.14

Spriritual beliefs are an important consideration in the decisions or choices I make.....38(17%)A. 59(27%) 67(30%)S. 34(15%)R. 16(7%)N. $\bar{X}$=2.68

My experiences at VCU have influenced the extent to which spiritual beliefs are an important consideration in the decisions or choices I make.....17(8%)S.A. 38(17%)A. 62(28%)N. 71(32%)D. 29(13%)S.D. $\bar{X}$=3.26

4. Values Toward Personal and Professional Growth

b. Self-knowledge, self-confidence, and high self-esteem

It is important for me to have meaning and purpose in my life.....150(68%)S.A. 63(29%)A. 2(1%)N. 1(.5%)D. 1(.5%)S.D. $\bar{X}$=1.34

My experiences at VCU have helped me to find a meaning and purpose in my life....21(10%)S.A. 61(28%)A. 78(35%)N. 33(15%)D. 19(9%)S.D. $\bar{X}$=2.85

c. Career, professional, or occupational development.

The primary purpose of the university is to train me for a job or profession...54(24%)S.A. 75(34%)A. 40(18%)N. 43(20%)D. 6(3%)S.D. $\bar{X}$ = 2.41

Preparing for an occupation or profession.

96

A. To you personally.....158(72%)E. 52(24%)V.I. 9(4%)S.I. $\bar{X}$ = 1.32
B. To the university.....123(56%)E. 68(31%)V.I. 24(11%)S.I. 3(1%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$ = 1.57

87

d. Health and wellness, leisure-time, and recreational activities.

I engage in activities that promote my health....59(27%)S.A. 113(51%)A. 29(13%)N. 11(5%)D. 5(2%)S.D. $\bar{X}$ = 2.03

As a result of my experiences at VCU I have developed habits and attitudes that will promote a healthy life.....14(6%)S.A. 82(37%)A. 80(36%)N. 32(15%)D. 8(4%)S.D. $\bar{X}$ = 2.71

Being involved in activities that promote good health.

A. To you personally.....83(38%)E. 96(43%)V.I. 36(16%)S.I. 4(2%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$ = 1.82
B. To the university.....46(21%)E. 78(35%)V.I. 64(29%)S.I. 30(14%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$ = 2.36

33

e. Aestheticism.

The arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, music, etc.) are an important part of my life.....	48(22%)S.A.	74(34%)A.	60(27%)N.	27(12%)D.	8(4%)S.D.	$\bar{X}$ = 2.42
My experiences at VCU have increased the importance of the arts in my life.....	18(8%)S.A.	52(24%)A.	71(32%)N.	54(24%)D.	18(8%)S.D.	$\bar{X}$ = 3.01

Having appreciation for the arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, music, etc.).

A. To you personally.....	70(32%)E.	77(36%)V.I.	57(26%)S.I.	15(7%)N.V.I.	$\bar{X}$ = 2.08
B. To the university.....	71(32%)E.	69(31%)V.I.	52(15%)S.I.	21(10%)N.V.I.	$\bar{X}$ = 2.12

f. Understanding and appreciation of historical perspectives.

* My experiences at VCU have increased my understanding and appreciation of historical perspectives in solving problems.....	6(3%)S.A.	73(33%)A.	80(36%)N.	41(19%)D.	16(7%)S.D.	$\bar{X}$ = 2.94

g. Ethics involved in a career, profession, or occupation.

* My experiences at VCU have increased my understanding of the ethics of my future profession or occupation..	31(14%)S.A.	118(53%)A.	37(17)N.	21(10%)D.	6(3%)S.D.	$\bar{X}$ = 2.31

Understanding the ethics of a career, profession, or occupation. *

A. To you personally.....	126(57%)E.	79(36%)V.I.	10(5%)S.I.	3(1%)N.V.I.	$\bar{X}$ = 1.50
B. To the university.....	97(44%)E.	79(36%)V.I.	28(13%)S.I.	11(5%)N.V.I.	$\bar{X}$ = 1.78

5. Social and Political Consciousness and Responsibility

a. Political heritage (e.g., freedom, equality, liberty, capitalism, individualism, due process, democracy)

My experiences at VCU have increased my understanding of our political heritage (e.g., freedom, equality, liberty, due process, democracy).....8(4%)S.A. 74(34%)A. 72(33%)N. 44(20%)D. 20(9%)S.D. $\bar{X}$ = 2.97

b. Involvement in the democratic process

My experiences at VCU have increased my political consciousness.....5(2%)S.A. 65(29%)A. 78(35%)N. 45(20%)D. 19(9%)S.D. $\bar{X}$ = 3.04

My experiences at VCU have increased my awareness of the need to be involved in the political process.....4(2%)S.A. 61(28%)A. 77(35%)N. 55(25%)D. 20(9%)S.D. $\bar{X}$ = 3.12

c. Involvement in community services to others

My experiences at VCU have increased my social consciousness.....52(24%)S.A. 98(44%)A. 42(19%)N. 22(10%)D. 3(1%)S.D. $\bar{X}$ = 2.26

My experiences at VCU have increased my social responsibility.....17(8%)S.A. 90(41%)A. 65(29%)N. 31(14%)D. 9(4%)S.D. $\bar{X}$ = 2.65

Being involved in community service to help others.

A. To you personally.....30(14%)E. 117(53%)V.I. 63(29%)S.I. 7(3%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$ = 2.22
B. To the university.....56(25%)E. 76(34%)V.I. 59(27%)S.I. 24(11%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$ = 2.24

d. Responsibilities of citizenship

My experiences at VCU have increased my understanding of what it means to be a responsible citizen.....13(6%)S.A. 58(26%)A. 93(42%)N. 36(16%)D. 12(5%)S.D. $\bar{X}$ = 2.89

Fulfilling my responsibilities as a citizen.

A. To you personally.....62(28%)E. 101(46%)V.I. 45(20%)S.I. 8(4%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$ = 2.00
B. To the university.....65(29%)E. 80(36%)V.I. 50(23%)S.I. 17(8%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$ = 2.10

When I debate issues or ideas with others I am not easily swayed.....21(10%)A. 81(37%)O. 89(40%)S. 21(10%)R. 2(1%)N. $\bar{X}$ = 2.54

Being wealthy.

A. To you personally.....18(8%)E. 41(19%)V.I. 108(49%)S.I. 49(22%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$ = 2.87
B. To the university.....28(13%)E. 45(20%)V.I. 74(34%)S.I. 63(29%)N.V.I. $\bar{X}$ = 2.82

Writing Assignment #1

Whereas previous assignments have been aimed at getting you to think about some specific topic in the course, this assignment invites you to think more broadly. We want you to write about a concrete moral problem and our interest is in seeing how you would think about a moral issue. You may discuss one or more of the theories we have talked about his semester where they are relevant, but there is no reason for you to do so if you would prefer to attack the problem directly. The best essays will be those that set out the author's position in a clear and persuasive way and develop a plausible and coherent set of reasons to support that position.

Topic:

Imagine you have been selected to be a member of a task force to develop a policy for a school system on the following issue:

Attendance in public school for students, faculty, or staff who have AIDS

What would your recommendation to the Task Force be? Please be sure to address each of the following in your recommendation:

What policy do you think would be best for the school system to adopt?
What values lead you to endorse this policy and how are those values served by the policy?
What objections to your proposal do you anticipate and how would you respond to those whose values might lead them to disagree with your recommendations?

Writing Assignment # 2

Whereas previous assignments have been aimed at getting you to think about some specific topic in the course, this assignment invites you to think more broadly. We want you to write about a concrete moral problem and our interest is in seeing how you would think about a moral issue. You may discuss one or more of the theories we have talked about his semester where they are relevant, but there is no reason for you to do so if you would prefer to attack the problem directly. The best essays will be those that set out the author's position in a clear and persuasive way and develop a plausible and coherent set of reasons to support that position.

Topic:

Suppose you have just discovered that your roommate has AIDS, and your roommate, who you know to engage in activities that are likely to spread the disease, announces that he or she sees no reason to change his or her sexual behavior.

What would you do in this situation? Please be sure to address each of the following in your discussion:

- What would you say to your roommate?
- What steps would you be prepared to take if your roommate refused to listen to your advice?
- What values lead you to respond in this way and how are those values served by the steps that you take?
- What objections to your proposal do you anticipate from your roommate and others who might be affected and how would you respond to those whose values might lead them to disagree with you about the steps you would take?

VALUES COMMITTEE

Writing Assessment-Grading System

Writing Samples will be graded using the following criteria as independent categories:

1) INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING: A) The extent to which the writing indicates the issues/principles involved. B) The extent to which the writing sample indicates independent thinking. C. The extent to which the thinking is logical and well developed.

2) VALUES TOWARDS OTHERS: The extent to which the writing sample indicates consideration of possible perspectives, respect for human dignity, flexibility.

3) SOCIAL AND/OR POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY: The extent to which the writing sample demonstrates an awareness of due process, democratic process, responsibilities of a citizen.

SCALE:

Likert type- 1-5
Three scores for sub-categories, average to get composite score.

DESCRIPTORS FOR JUDGING CATEGORIES.

1= vague; seems to have little idea of issues/principles, perspectives, human dignity, responsibility of citizen, etc. Ideas, conclusions not supported; lack of logic; gross generalizations. (Banana Split in a blender)

2= weak, but makes an attempt to address issues/principle in some fashion; marginal recognition of issues; inferences not supported or are not appropriate; marginal. (Vanilla ice-cream)

3= consideration of issues/principles, but gaps in important considerations; adequate in some areas, with weaknesses in other areas; some ideas supported and logical, with other areas not logical or supported; lack of depth or breadth. (Vanilla ice-cream with chocolate sauce)

4= considers most issues very well, or one or more in an outstanding way, but represents narrow view or leaves out important issue; generally good, well supported; appropriate logic; some inconsistencies or biases. (Banana Split, no cherry on top, half of a banana)

5= excellent; well thought out; clear grasp of issues/principles, perspectives, human dignity, responsibilities of citizen, etc. Appropriate analysis, synthesis; well supported; depth and breadth; (Banana Split)